

**MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING**  
**CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS**  
**September 9, 2014**  
**6:30 P.M.**

A regular meeting was held by City Council on September 9, 2014 at 6:30 p.m. over which Mayor Bobby L. Davis presided. Council members Michael Baker, Ronald Atkinson, Ralph Atkinson, Odessa Gregg, Emerson Hunt and Joseph Frazier were present. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown, City Clerk Pam Jones, and City Attorney Kenneth Davis.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order and Councilwoman Gregg gave the opening prayer. Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Davis welcomed citizens, guests and the press. (Hometown TV)

Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson made a motion to accept the minutes from the regular meeting on July 8, 2014, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried.

Brad Altman of the Street Department was recognized as the *August Employee of the Month* and presented with a gift certificate. Mayor Davis thanked him for his hard work and dedication to the City.

At the request of Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson, Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to request a Resolution for Coach Bob Rankin being named to the SC Coaches Hall of Fame, seconded by Councilman Emerson Hunt. The motion carried.

Mr. Ken Robinson gave a presentation on the need for a traffic light to be placed at the intersection of Greenwood Park and the 576 By-pass. Due to the number of accidents and deaths at that intersection, he requested a Resolution from Council in support of a petition, of more than 1,500 signatures, to have a traffic light installed at that location. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to prepare a resolution to help support the traffic light petition as requested by Mr. Robinson, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried.

Regarding the Resolution Authorizing Submission of a CDBG Grant, Mr. Ammons commented that the resolution is one of the first steps in applying for a GDBG grant to purchase a fire truck. The grant is for \$478,000 with a \$50,000 match from the City (and would have a year to 18 months to come up with the match amount). Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to accept the grant proposal with one exception, that the signing for the City be the Chief Administrator, which is the Mayor. Councilman Joseph Frazier seconded the motion. In trying to determine where the match funds would come from, Councilman Ralph Atkinson asked that if the truck that is need of \$20,000 in repairs is sold, how much would it bring, to which Mr. Ammons responded \$10,000 to \$15,000. He also asked because of ISO ratings, if the \$20,000 was spent to repair that truck, would it bring us up to where we need to be? Chief Trey Cooper responded that the truck is an '85 and even with repairs it could possibly be out of service in six months and it is fiscally impractical to spend that for repairs. Even If we don't get the grant, we definitely need a pumper in service. Councilman Ralph Atkinson inquired that because of the ISO rating, if we got the grant, instead of selling the truck for \$15,000, would we be better off to spend the \$20,000 to repair the truck later and have an extra spare truck? Chief Cooper responded that if we get the grant, we could use the old truck for training purposes, but would not help on ISO. Motion carried.

Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to adopt the Intergovernmental Agreement with Marion County (as part of the CDBG grant for the fire truck) with the chief administrator, which is the Mayor, representing the City. The motion was seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier and carried.

Mr. Ammons presented a list of surplus equipment that with Council's permission, would be sold on-line on govdeals with a minimum starting bid. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to allow the Mayor and City Administrator to move forward with the sale of the listed surplus equipment at the minimum bids as presented. Councilman Michael Baker offered a second and the motion carried.

Mr. Ernest Davis presented a proposal on the upcoming Door of Hope HALLOWfest that would serve approximately 1,000 – 1,200 from 30 cities in SC and NC. This event is an alternative Halloween event and includes rides and treats for children in attendance. It is

growing each year and Mr. Davis made a request for financial aid from Council to help with this event. Mayor Davis commented that if Council approved this request, he would talk with the City Administrator and City Treasurer regarding using Hospitality Tax funds. Councilwoman Gregg offered to personally contribute to this event. Councilman Frazier asked the Attorney to clarify if the City could use taxpayer's money for a church sponsored event to which Attorney Davis responded that it would depend on how the City administers its Hospitality Tax revenues. Mr. Ammons commented that there is a line item in the Hospitality budget for promotions and advertisements. Mayor Davis commented the only way we could do it (from Hospitality fund) is because it is bringing in people from a number of other cities and would be promoting Marion. We will ask the Attorney to give a ruling on using Hospitality fund for a church event before we decide. Councilman Ralph Atkinson commented that he knew it was good program but does not know if the request can be honored as it could start a precedent we cannot afford; he made a motion to support the event by providing police/public safety to help with traffic control due to the large number of people expected to attend the event. Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson seconded the motion. After comments by Mr. Ernest Davis, Mayor Davis reiterated that the City Attorney would have to give a legal opinion/guidance on this and Council would still have to vote. Councilman Joseph Frazier made an amendment to the motion to allow the Mayor, City Administrator and Attorney to find out whether or not we can move forward with Hospitality taxes to assist Door of Hope with their program, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. Attorney Davis asked if the motion from Mr. Frazier was an addition or substitute to Mr. Atkinson's motion, to which Councilman Frazier stated that it was an addition. Councilman Ralph Atkinson asked for a clarification on Councilman Frazier's motion as to what type help he wanted to give them, whether financial or other. Mayor Davis stated that, If advised by the Attorney that Hospitality funds can be used, a Special Council Meeting will be called in order for Council to vote on an amount to be determined. Motion carried.

Mr. Isaac Nixon was not present to make his request for use of a City facility.

Regarding Ms. Jean Smith's request for a donation of a City Flag to be used in her class room in Mullins, Councilwoman Gregg commented that as this is a flag from the City of Marion, Marion County School Board should send the request. Councilman Ralph Atkinson stated that every classroom in the Marion County could request a flag and, as we are in a short budget,

anyone who wants a flag should purchase it for the price we have already approved. Councilwoman Gregg responded that she agreed with Councilman Atkinson, if we do it for one class we could have any number of classes asking, which is why she suggested that the Marion County School Board ask for a flag which would be for the whole Marion County School District. Councilwoman Odessa Gregg made a motion that the request of the City flag of Marion go to the School Board and let them request it as a board, the City Council would entertain the motion to let them have one flag for the Marion County School Board, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson. Ms. Smith will be contacted to go the school board and have them request the flag. The flags are sold for \$75.00 each. Councilman Ralph Atkinson inquired as to where the money would come from for us to give a flag to the school board. Mayor Davis responded that we have a flag fund from those flags we have sold/are selling and the money would come from that. Motion carried.

Councilman Joseph Frazier requested that the Clerk read the presentation that was to be presented by Mr. Isaac Nixon of the USPS. Mayor Davis commented that Mr. Nixon was going to ask for use of a City facility and had already made his presentation at the Town Hall meeting, along with comments from the Marion Postmaster. Mayor Davis asked that anyone who wished to see that presentation contact the City Clerk for a copy. Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to have the Clerk read the information from Mr. Isaac Nixon, president of the local postal union (APWU) regarding the Postal Service, to those present, seconded by Councilman Emerson Hunt. The motion carried 4-2 with Mayor Bobby L. Davis, and Council members Michael Baker, Joseph Frazier, Odessa Gregg and Emerson Hunt voting **yes** and Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson and Councilman Ralph Atkinson voting **no**. City Clerk Pam Jones read the information that was to have been presented by Mr. Nixon.

Mr. Don Strickland of PDRTA presented an update on the Marion to Myrtle Beach bus service. The bus averages 25 riders per day, with some days up to 55 riders and PDRTA is in need of a 12% financial match from the City of Marion. At this time the bus will be able to run through November and PDRTA will try to do whatever they can to keep the bus service running. Councilman Hunt asked if other entities in the County were giving to help PDRTA; due to how PDRTA serves the community, this would be one program he would like to help keep running. Councilman Michael Baker made a motion that our board member come to the next meeting

and give Council an update, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier. The motion carried 6-1 with Councilman Ralph Atkinson voting **no**. Mayor Davis thanked Mr. Strickland for coming. Mayor Davis asked Mr. Strickland if the amount they were seeking was an additional \$6,600 (from Marion) to which Mr. Strickland said yes. After the board member comes before Council at the next meeting, they will then make a decision as to what the City can do.

Mr. Leo Phillips gave a presentation on the “Project Hope Health Fair” being held on September 27<sup>th</sup> at the Door of Hope church in Marion. Health care screenings for kids will be free and Mr. Phillips requested a contribution of \$1,500 from the City to help support this event. Councilman Ralph Atkinson commented that it was a good project, but did not think the City could financially support it with the budget being as tight as it is. Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson made motion not to fund this event as the City cannot finally afford to help at this time, seconded by Councilman Ralph Atkinson; motion carried.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to give 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading on ORDINANCE 14-08 PERSONNEL/TRAVEL POLICY, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson. Councilman Joseph Frazier amended the motion to take this Ordinance item by item (a, b, & c) as there are things that need to be spelled out, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made substitute amendment to that motion that the Mayor and Administrator come back with something Council can vote on. We’ve already had 1<sup>st</sup> Reading and it’s been 30 days so you could have come back with a different recommendation if you wanted something changed. The substitute motion was seconded by Councilman Emerson Hunt and carried 6-1 with Councilman Joseph Frazer voting **no**. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of this Ordinance carried and by this vote Mr. Frazier was advised to see the Mayor and Administrator.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT**

Mr. Ammons stated that the City crews work schedule had gone back to their regular hours of 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Work on the Tollison Center and Elementary gyms is still on target. Mr. Ammons encouraged Council to stop by to see how work was progressing.

### **CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE**

Attorney Davis had nothing to report at this time.

### **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

Mayor Davis stated that Council received all departmental reports in their packets. Mr. William Campbell, Senior Council co-chair, informed everyone that the Senior Council would meet on September 25<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. at the Marion Fire Department. Assistant Police Chief Dewayne Tinnie commented that the police department has been giving presentations on bullying. Also, carpet and door upgrades have been completed at the station and 4 of the new police cars are in with 2 more coming in Thursday. Fire Chief Trey Cooper commented that they were working on the CDBG grant. Also, everyone in the basic firefighter's class passed and there would be a group of firefighters.

### **DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR**

Councilman Emerson Hunt had no comment at this time.

Councilwoman Odessa Gregg thanked the Marion County School District for the VIP pass and also thanked Dolly Boyer and her group for their hard work with their neighborhood watch.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson had no comment at this time.

Councilman Joseph Frazier spoke with Senator Kent Williams regarding speed limit sign on McEachern Heights and Withlacoochee and a speed limit sign should soon be in place. He thanked everyone for their efforts in cleaning up the house at 609 McEachern Heights.

Councilman Michael Baker had no comment at this time.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis thanked Chief Cooper for his hard work. He was also pleased to report that there were many positive comments from the community regarding the police department. The security department at Wal-Mart told Mayor Davis that the Marion Police Department was doing a great job and the Mayor asked Asst. Chief Tinnie to pass that along. The two movie productions filmed in Marion will have a red-carpet premier on November 22 at CD Joyner for a selected number of people. More details will follow. Tractor Supply has opened their new store here and will be a very community oriented store. Reverend Larry Williams will have another food distribution event in October. Mayor Davis and the City Clerk are working on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Veteran's Day Program to be held in November. When asked by Mayor Davis,

Chief Trey Cooper informed that there would be a 9/11 Program held at the Fire Department with the Woodmen of the World presenting them a flag. Everyone is encouraged to attend. Mayor Davis thanked Mayor Pro-tem Atkinson for speaking at that event. The Neighborhood Watch, with the approval of the Police Chief, Assistant Chief and Council, plan to steam clean the outside of the MPD. At the request of Mayor Davis, Councilman Baker commented that the fall community garden is in process and Mr. Sanders has been working on it very diligently. Councilman Frazier inquired about a permit Mr. Herbert Clapper has asked for Confederate Day, to which Mayor Davis responded that Mr. Ammons would check into that and if action is needed, we will do that.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

With no objection from Council, Mayor Davis asked that Mr. Campbell be allowed to speak before they went into Executive Session. Mr. Campbell was present to speak on Town Hall Meeting Issues. Mr. Campbell thanked Councilman Hunt for bringing issues regarding the Police Department to the Town Hall meetings and we are now hearing great news about the Police Department. He is in agreement with Mr. Isaac Nixon from the USPS who spoke at the Town Hall meeting regarding holding a meeting to inform the public about what is going on at the USPS and hopes that Mr. Nixon will be granted permission to hold an open forum to make his presentation. Mayor Davis thanked Mr. Campbell for coming to the meeting.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Mayor Davis asked that Assistant Chief Tinnie, Captain Barr and Mrs. Heather Evans come into Executive Session. Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss personnel matters in the Police Department, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried. Upon returning from Executive Session, Mayor Davis stated that no action was taken. Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to enter open session, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried.

Regarding the Police Department funding request for computer upgrades, Mr. Ammons recommended that Council budget \$8,500 from the surplus equipment sale to fund the computer upgrades. Councilman Michael Baker made a motion to use surplus equipment sales to upgrade those computers, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

---

Mayor Bobby L. Davis

---

City Clerk Pam Jones

Taped September 9, 2014